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ABSTRACT

This book examines the professional and political ideology that informed and sustained the Public Library Inquiry--an inquiry conceived in the late 1940s to study and document the conditions, achievements, and weaknesses of public libraries and librarianship. This book explores the consistencies, contradictions, and assumptions inherent within the legitimating ideology of public librarianship expressed by the Public Library Inquiry. It focuses on the nature of the Inquiry's ideological arguments concerning the social nature of the need for library service, and what the public library ought to do to fulfill that need. The book contains the following 10 chapters: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "Interpretative Context: Librarianship and Professional Ideology"; (3) "The Public Library and the Postwar World"; (4) "The Beginnings of the Public Library Inquiry"; (5) "Leigh's Proposal" (Robert D. Leigh, author of the plan for the Inquiry); (6) "The Critique of the Public Library"; (7) "The Critique of American Culture"; (8) "Democracy and the Civic Library"; (9) "The Political Strategy"; and (10) "Conclusion." Includes bibliography and index. (Contains 105 references.) (JAK)

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